THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Department of Posts is using technology to provide technology-based services like e-Post, Instant Money Order (iMO), electronic Money Order (eMO), e-Payment, International Money Transfer Service (IMTS), Speed Post tract and trace, Online booking of complaints, etc. Besides, Department has introduced Multipurpose Counter Machines (MPCM) as a single window system for all postal transactions. Information kiosks have been provided at selected Post Offices as allow public to access Postal information.

Tariff of BSNL and MTNL

†1349. SHRI OM PRAKASH MATHUR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is contemplating to bring down the tariff of BSNL's and MTNL's mobile and basic phones to compete with private operators in view of increasing competition in telecommunication sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor and whether there is any plan to do so in the future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT): (a) and (b) As per the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) Act of 1997, the power to regulate tariff of telecom services in the country is vested with TRAI. TRAI, in exercise of its powers, has put tariff for telecom services under forbearance except with regard to Fixed Line Service in Rural Areas, National Roaming Service in Cellular Mobile Service and leased line service. Thus service providers, including BSNL and MTNL, have the flexibility to offer lower call charges to the subscribers. Both BSNL and MTNL keep revising their tariffs as per the needs of the subscribers and prevailing market conditions. Presently offered tariffs, by BSNL and MTNL, are competitive in comparison to private operators.

(c) Does not arise in view of (a) and (b) above.

Speed post facility

1350. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Speed post facility is available only in cities in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of speed post centres running in each State as on date;

(d) whether Government proposes to extend such facilities to rural areas;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.